

# A PEST OF COCONUT PALMS IN PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA

By W. H. T. TAMS

IN the spring of 1952 Mr. V. Sleptzow, one of the London representatives of the Sociedade Agricola do Madal, Quelimane, Africa Oriental Portuguesa, brought me a photograph of larvae, cocoons and moths of a destructive pest that was attacking coconut palms on a plantation at Micaune, Moçambique.

At that time I could do no more than state that the insect involved was a moth belonging to the family Limacodidae, and I asked Mr. Sleptzow if he could procure specimens from the plantation. A consignment was sent by air from Quelimane on 9th June, 1952, but there were no moths, and the small bottles containing larvae had become loose and were smashed, completely ruining the whole consignment, which arrived in a state of putrefaction. The larvae and cocoons were quite unknown to me, and I asked Mr. Sleptzow if he would be good enough to try again. He at once communicated with the African management of the company, with the result that in the middle of September I received by air mail another consignment of larvae and cocoons, and two battered crippled female moths, which had emerged on the journey. I carefully nursed the cocoons at home, and succeeded in rearing a number of moths of both sexes.

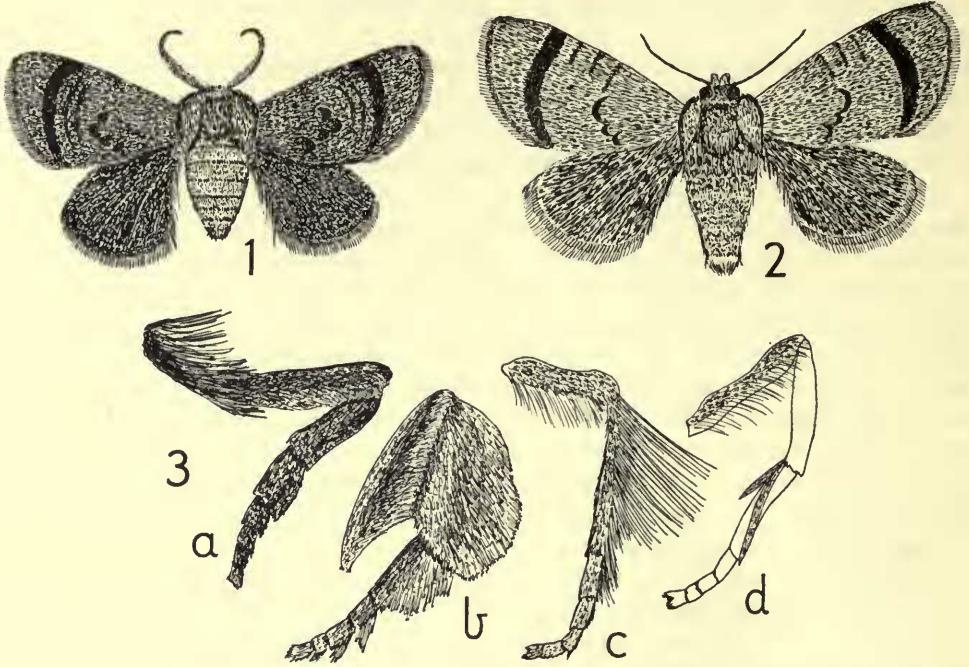
After a close study of the species I found that not only was it unknown to me, but I could not find any close relative with which I could associate it generically. Accordingly, I sent several examples to Dr. E. Martin Hering of the Berlin Museum. Dr. Hering, who is the recognized authority on the family Limacodidae, informed me that he fully agreed with me that the species did not belong to any known genus, but appeared to be related to the genera in which the hind tibia bears two spurs only, and the tarsi are clothed with scales rather than with the more delicate hair-scales. It may be related to the *Zinara* group, and has some features suggestive of *Sporetolepis* Karsch, which, however, has at the end of the fore wing cell the fork of the parting-vein deep and closed distally by a cross-vein, whereas in the genus here described the fork is shallow and open.

## *TROGOCRADA* gen. n.

Typus generis *Trogocrada deleter* sp. n.

Antenna in ♂ pectinate, the pectinations decreasing slightly in length distad. Antenna in ♀ simple. Palpus stout, upcurved before frons, 3rd segment small, almost spherical, inconspicuous. Hind tibia with only one pair of spurs; mid tibia with a bushy covering of long scales, all tarsi covered with scales (not fine hair-scales) (fig. 3, *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*). Fore wing with veins Sc, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> separate and

almost straight; veins  $R_3 + R_4 + R_5$  stalked, medials separate,  $M_2$  nearer to  $M_3$  than to  $M_1$ ; parting-vein within the cell terminating in an open shallow fork. Hind wing with vein Sc anastomosing with middle of anterior margin of cell; vein  $R_s$  stalked with vein  $M_1$  for proximal fourth; lower angle of cell not appreciably nearer termen than upper angle. (Figs. 4, 5.)



FIGS. 1-3.—*Trogocrada deleter* sp. n. Fig. 1, male; fig. 2, female; fig. 3, legs (a) fore, (b) mid, (c) hind, to show vestiture, (d) hind, to show tibial spurs.

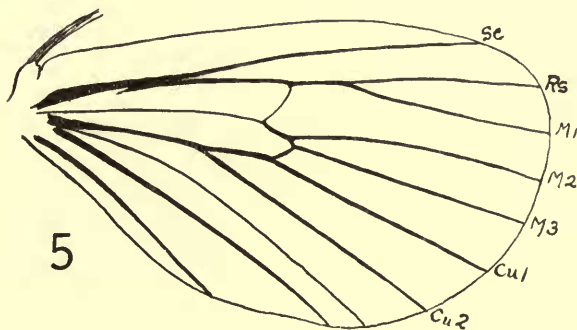
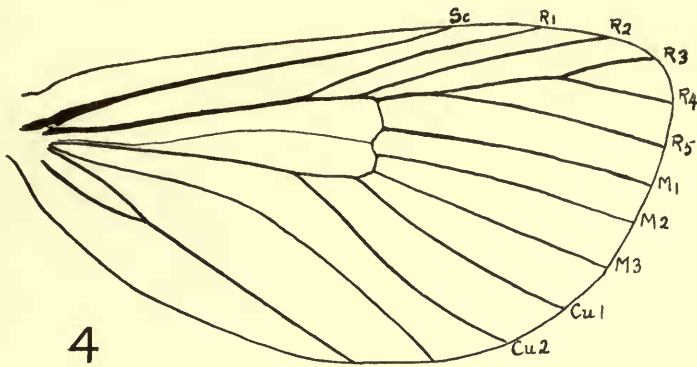
*Trogocrada deleter* sp. n.

(Figs. 1, ♂, 2 ♀.)

♂. Antenna warm buff, degraded with fuscous. Palpus mainly warm blackish brown, warm buff apically. Frons warm blackish brown, vertex apricot buff. Thorax warm to apricot buff, sometimes degraded with fuscous. Abdomen fuscous, lighter near base. Pectus and legs light to apricot buff, shaded with warm blackish brown in front. Venter fuscous, lighter medially. Fore wing apricot buff, proximal three-fourths heavily over-shaded with fuscous to warm blackish brown, with a wavy appearance between the velvety blackish-brown lunules medially and a strong, velvety, blackish-brown curved postmedial fascia (cf. fig. 1), the distal portion of the wing suffused with tawny. Hind wing fuscous to fuscous black.

Underside of both fore and hind wings fuscous to fuscous black. Expanse: 22-24 mm.

♀. Similar in pattern to ♂; the predominating colour may be apricot buff with tawny to fuscous shading beyond the postmedial fascia on the fore wing, the medial markings and postmedial fascia velvety blackish brown, or the whole wing may be suffused with fuscous. Underside may be apricot buff or fuscous. Expanse: 26–27 mm.



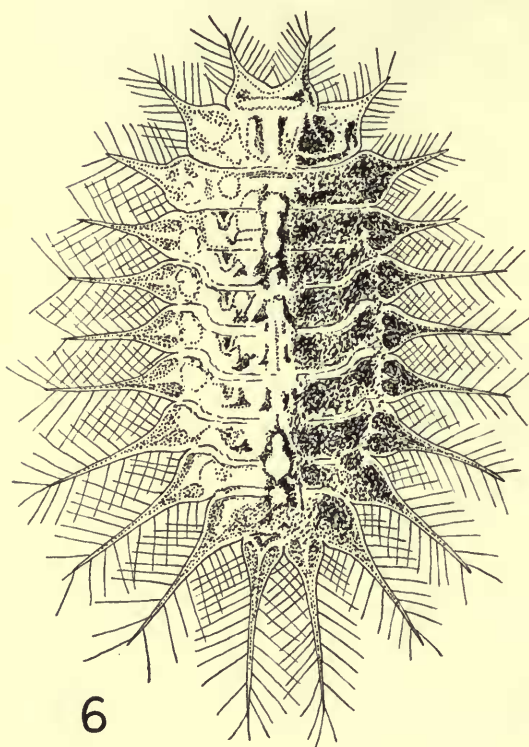
FIGS. 4, 5.—*Trogochrada deleter* sp. n. Fig. 4, fore-wing venation; fig. 5, hind-wing venation.

♂ genitalia. The male genitalia exhibit a robust structure of segments IX–X, the division between the terga being difficult to discern. The various structures are better displayed by figures than by descriptions. The valva is most unusual in shape and possesses distally a sort of loose “corona” of woolly hair-scales, and two fairly stout whip-like setae (figs. 8–13).

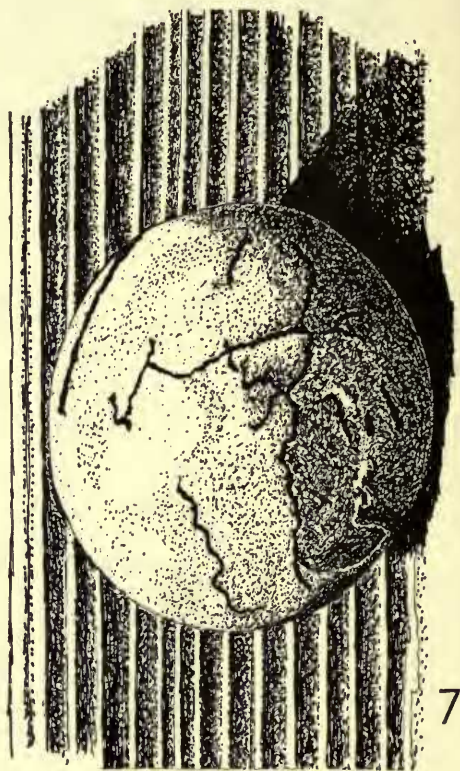
♀ genitalia. A very lightly sclerotised ostium bursae; ovipositor lobes broad and prominent.

Larva (fig. 6). The larva is green with velvety darker green shading and a variable line down the middle of the dorsum, frequently white edged with reddish, or entirely reddish. In shape it is quite unlike any Limacodid larva known to me.

Cocoon (fig. 7). The larva makes an almost spherical cocoon (9 mm.  $\times$  8 mm.), whitish with irregular blackish markings.



6

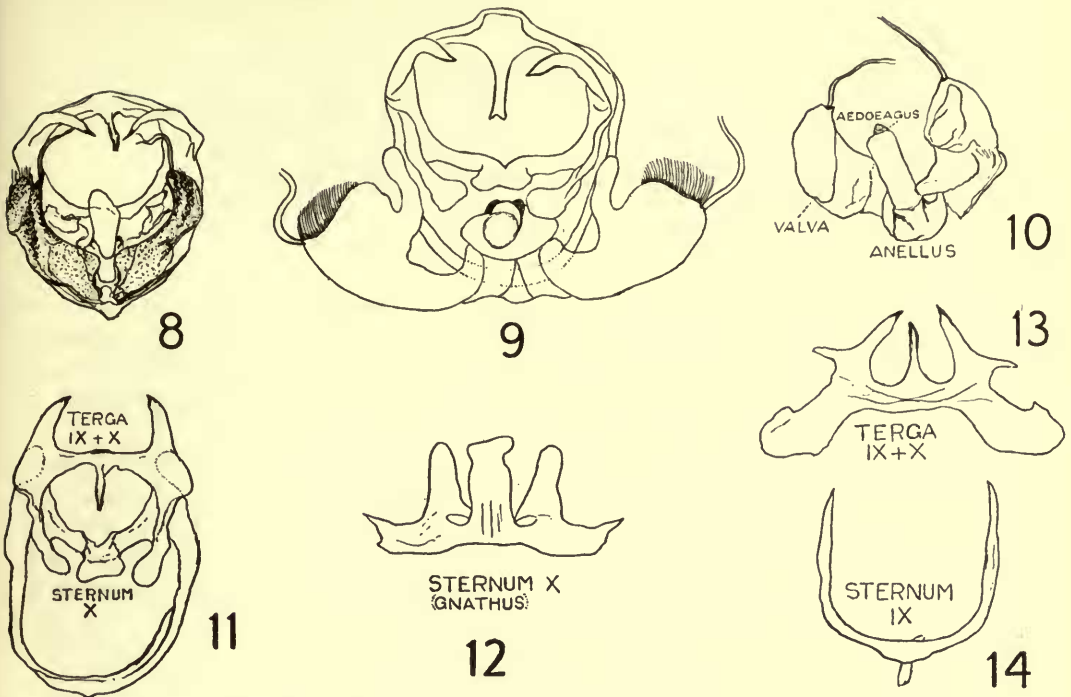


7

FIGS. 6, 7.—*Trogocrada deleter* sp. n. Fig. 6, larva; fig. 7, cocoon.

Holotype ♂, allotype ♀ and 8 paratypes:

Portuguese East Africa, Micaune, destroying coconut plantations. Presented by the Sociedade Agricola do Madal, through Messrs. E. Isen (Quelimane), M. Terestchenko and V. Sleptzow, to whom I am grateful for the opportunity to study such an interesting moth.



FIGS. 8-14.—*Trogocrada deleter* sp. n., ♂ genitalia. Fig. 8, complete armature, valvae (shaded) unspread; fig. 9, complete armature, valvae spread; fig. 10, valvae, anellus and aedoeagus separated from segments IX-X; fig. 11, segments IX-X; fig. 12, sternum X (gnathus); fig. 13, terga IX-X (tegumen and uncus); fig. 14, sternum IX (vinculum).